

Doc in which Lincoln
Died

Drawer 15

DEATH

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Bed in Which Lincoln Died

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



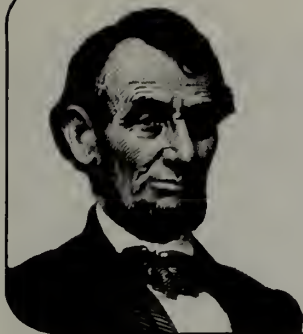
The fatal shooting of Abraham Lincoln, one of the most shocking events in history, happened at 10:13 p.m. 100 years ago today. The bed in which the President died, in a house across the street from Ford's Theatre, Washington, scene of the shooting, is a treasured possession of the Chicago Historical Society, where it is pictured on display. The society purchased it in 1920 as part of a collection of

Lincolnuma of Charles F. Gunther, confectioner and politician. The engraving on the wall and the chairs are replicas from the room in which the President died (see picture at right, above). Mr. Lincoln lingered for about nine hours, after being shot. High government officials and members of his family surrounded him at his bedside. He died at 7:22 a.m. April 15.

*The Bed in Which Lincoln Died
After Shooting 100 Years Ago Today*



Lincoln on his deathbed. When he succumbed, his secretary of war, Edward M. Stanton (standing, back to viewer, near right) said: "Now he belongs to the ages."



Lincoln Lore

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LINCOLN'S DEATHBED



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 1. Photograph by Julius Ulke. See story inside.

As the morning light crept into the disheveled room of William T. Clark on April 15, 1865, one of the upstairs boarders carried his camera into the room. Clark roomed in the house of William Petersen, and the President of the United States had just died on Clark's bed. The cameraman was Julius Ulke, who, with his brother Henry, had been up all night fetching water for the doctors.

Tired though they were, everyone sensed the historical importance of the events just witnessed in Clark's humble little room. Julius Ulke apparently sensed the commercial possibilities in the situation as well. He and his brother were artistic, but it was difficult to make a living as an artist in bustling, commerce-minded America. Julius photographed people in Washington, selling his little paper pictures mounted on stiff cards with his name printed on the back. Henry, after a stint as an illustrator in New York, made his living painting the portraits of Washington's bureaucrats and politicians.

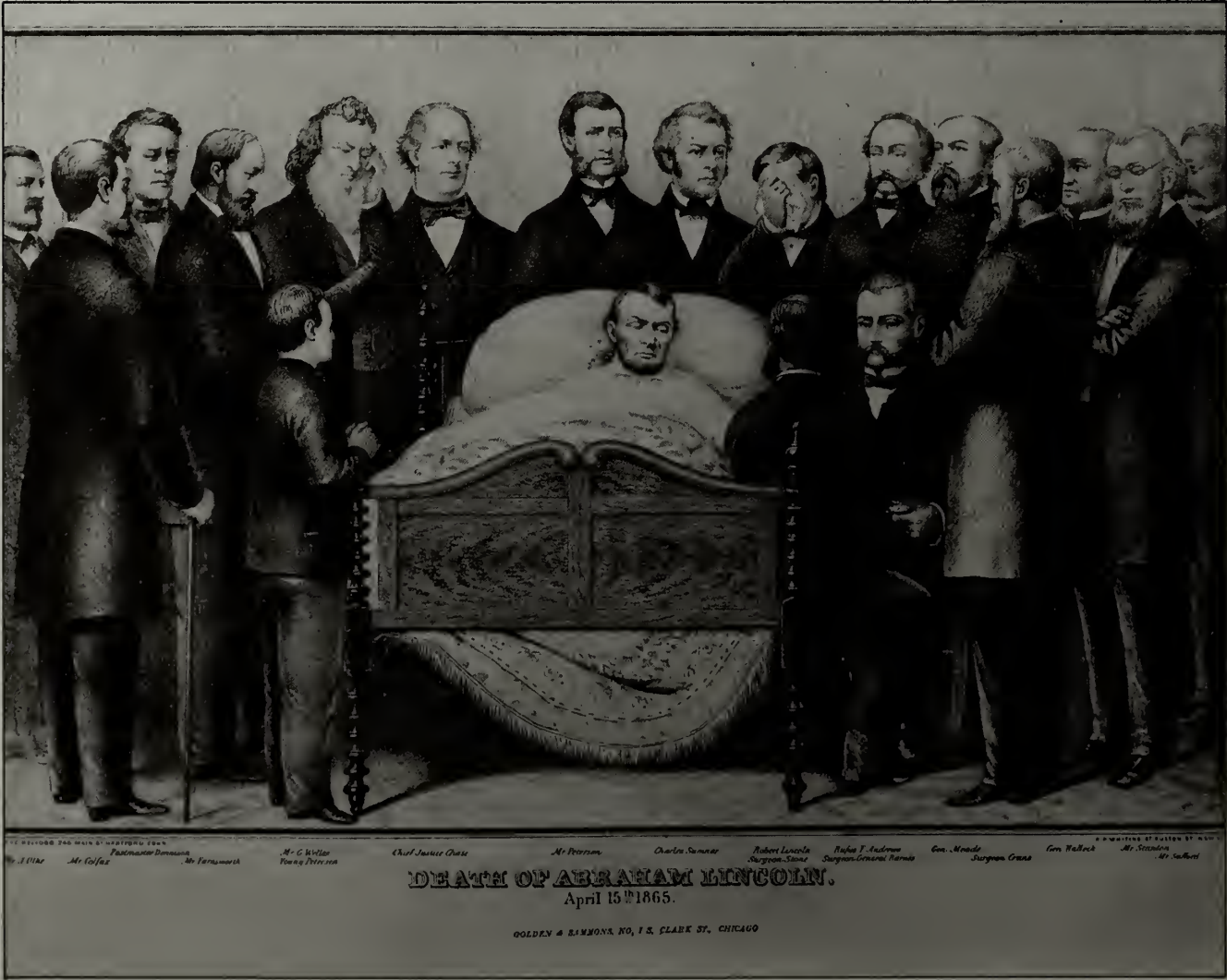
Julius Ulke knew that Americans would be curious to know what Lincoln's deathbed looked like, and he was just the man to show them. Fate seemed to have played into his hands, bringing the American historical event of the century almost to his very doorstep. He took at least two photographs of the scene before Clark cleaned up his room. Eventually, he mounted one of the pictures on a stiff card and had a caption carefully lettered on it: "View of the room in which President Lincoln died. . . ."

Others sniffed the scent of profit that hung about the little boarding house. Albert Berghaus, special artist for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, had followed President Lincoln

HENRY ULKE,
278 Pennsylvania Avenue,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
1865.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Credit on the back of a Ulke photograph.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. A Kellogg lithograph shows Julius Ulke at far left.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Henry Ulke appears with a top hat at left in Edward Mendel's lithograph, based on Berghaus's illustration.

to Richmond less than two weeks earlier, to capture the scene of what proved to be his last triumph. On Easter Sunday, April 16, Berghaus was at the Petersen house sketching the scene and asking the boarders who was present when Lincoln died. Most of the boarders saw to it that they were immortalized in Berghaus's sketch, for they placed Salmon P. Chase at the scene and he was not there in fact. Both the Ulkes appeared in the picture. *Leslie's* devoted a double issue to Lincoln's assassination and depended heavily on Berghaus's work as the centerpiece of their sensational appeal.

Julius Ulke, however, was destined not to realize anything from his photographs. The president's widow had forbidden photographs of her slain husband, and the War Department saw to the destruction of some photographs of Lincoln's body lying in state. The enterprising photographer probably read about this in the newspapers and decided not to try to sell his photographs.

They remained in the family for years and became wrinkled and torn, but from all evidence no copies were made. One of Ulke's photographs is well known from publication in *Life* magazine in 1961 and in Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr.'s *Twenty Days* in 1965. The other photograph was recently acquired by the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum and is reproduced on the cover of this issue of *Lincoln Lore*.

What became of Julius Ulke after 1865 is not known, but his brother Henry attained considerable prominence as a painter of the prominent personalities in Washington. One of these was Edwin M. Stanton, who had been present at Lincoln's deathbed and whose destruction of coffin photographs of the martyred president had perhaps ruined Julius's hopes for commercial gain from his photographs. When Henry Ulke painted Stanton, he chose a pose highly reminiscent of the pose Albert Berghaus had used in his influential illustration of the deathbed scene for *Leslie's*. The Stanton portrait suggests that Henry Ulke may have hoped to exploit the scene at the Petersen house as well.



National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.

FIGURE 5. Henry Ulke's portrait of Edwin M. Stanton.

The Illinois State Historical Society's 1985

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*To be presented at the
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NOVEMBER 29-30, 1985



The Illinois State Historical Society is seeking proposals for papers, or sessions, to be delivered at the Sixth Annual Symposium on Illinois History, November 29 and 30, 1985. Papers, or sessions, will be considered on any aspect of the history, literature, art and culture, politics, geography, archeology, anthropology, and related fields of Illinois and/or the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. The Symposium will be held in Springfield.

Individuals who wish to submit proposals should send a three hundred to six hundred word summary, along with resumes of intended participants, to:

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Original Bed in Chicago History Museum
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Bed in Petersen House
© Abraham Lincoln Online

Abraham Lincoln Deathbed

On April 14, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while watching a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. Doctors who attended him recognized he was dying and moved him across the street to a boarding house owned by William and Anna Petersen. He was placed in a bedroom rented by William T. Clark, a Union soldier who was out for the evening.

Lincoln's Last Moments

Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles entered the rear bedroom of the Petersen house soon after Lincoln arrived and saw "the President lay extended on a bed, breathing heavily." The doctors explained to Welles that Lincoln could not recover but might linger for several hours.

In his diary Welles wrote, "The giant sufferer lay extended diagonally across the bed, which was not long enough for him. He had been stripped of his clothes. His large arms, which were occasionally exposed, were of a size which one would scarce have expected from his spare appearance. His slow, full respiration lifted the clothes with each breath that he took. His features were calm and striking. I had never seen them appear to better advantage than for the first hour, perhaps, that I was there."

Early on April 15 Welles stepped out for a walk, but returned in time to see Lincoln die. He watched Lincoln's wife and oldest son struggle with sorrow. "Robert, his son, stood with several others at the head of the bed. He bore himself well, but on two occasions gave way to overpowering grief and sobbed aloud, turning his head and leaning on the shoulder of Senator Sumner. The respiration of the President became suspended at intervals, and at last entirely ceased at twenty-two minutes past seven."

After Lincoln's body was removed and visitors to the Petersen House left, an upstairs boarder set up a camera and photographed the bedroom. This evocative image, now part of the famed Meserve Collection, shows a woven coverlet strewn across the bed and a pillow soaked with Lincoln's blood. The picture was taken by Julius Ulke, who had furnished hot water to the doctors throughout the night.

Deathbed Moves to Chicago

The Petersen House, which is a popular tourist site in Washington, has been restored to its 1865 appearance, but does not contain the original Lincoln deathbed. When William and Anna Petersen died in 1871, their furniture was sold at auction. William H. Boyd purchased some of the furnishings, paying \$80 for the deathbed. His son inherited these items and sold them to Charles F. Gunther, a wealthy Chicago candy manufacturer and collector. After Gunther died in 1920, the Chicago

History Museum bought his extraordinary collection, which included the Lincoln deathbed and related furnishings.

You can see the Lincoln deathbed in the museum's permanent Civil War-era exhibition called "A House Divided: America in the Age of Lincoln." The walnut spool bed forms part of a grouping of Petersen House artifacts which include a rocking chair, bureau, candlestick, engraving, and gas jet. The museum owns many other important Lincoln items, including a blood-stained cape worn by his wife on April 14.

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